



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The City of Hammond (City) has adopted the following Citizen Participation Plan to meet the citizen participation requirements of Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The City is committed through adoption of this plan to full and total involvement of all residents of the community in the composition, implementation and assessment of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Attempts will be made to reach all citizens, particularly those who are of low to moderate income, living with a disability, minority, non-English-speaking, of special need, and/or living in substandard housing or blighted neighborhoods and/or in areas in which funds are proposed to be used. A copy of this plan will be made available to the public upon request.

As part of the citizen participation requirements and to maximize citizen interaction, the City shall:

1. provide for and encourage citizen participation with particular emphasis on participation by persons who are of low to moderate income, living with a disability, minority, non-English-speaking, of special need, and/or living in substandard housing or blighted neighborhoods and/or in areas in which funds are proposed to be used;
2. provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records relating to the actual use of funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended;
3. provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals;
4. provide for public hearings to obtain views and respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program. These hearings will consist of the development of needs and proposed activities and review of program performance. These hearings will be held after adequate notice, a minimum of 10 calendar days, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries with accommodations for persons with disabilities;

5. provide for a formal written procedure that will accommodate a timely written response, within 15 days where practicable, to written complaints and grievances;
6. where applicable, identify how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings; and
7. establish procedures and policies to ensure non-discrimination, based on disabilities, in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Written minutes of the hearings and an attendance roster will be maintained by the City.

Public Hearings

Notices informing citizens of any public hearings will appear in the official journal of the City a minimum of 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In addition, notices will also be posted in (City office buildings/town hall) and the hearing will be publicized through local community organizations (e.g. churches, clubs) and/or dissemination of leaflets in the target area. Hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries with accommodations for individuals with disabilities and non-English speaking persons. Whenever possible these hearings will be held within or near the target areas, at times affording participation by the most affected residents.

I. APPLICATION

Initial Public Hearing

An initial public hearing to address CDBG application submittal will be held a minimum of 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled submission of the application. The Citizen Participation Plan will be available at the hearing. The public notice for this hearing will state that the following will be discussed:

- a. the amount of funds available for proposed community development;
- b. the range of activities that may be undertaken, proposed activities under a Consolidated Plan and Action Plan, and how these activities will address identified needs; and
- c. the City's Citizen Participation Plan.

In addition, the notice shall state that all citizens, particularly those who are of low to moderate income, living with a disability, minority, non-English-speaking, of special need, and/or living in substandard housing or blighted neighborhoods, are encouraged to participate. Those citizens unable to attend this hearing may submit their views and proposals to:

Charles Borchers IV
Director of Administration
City of Hammond
PO Box 2788
Hammond LA 70404-2788

The notice will also state that special accommodations will be made for persons who wish to attend the hearing who are living with a disability, non-English-speaking, or of other special need provided the City receives a request for such accommodations no less than 3 days prior to the hearing.

Additional Public Hearings

The City may hold additional public hearings as necessary to ensure the public participation in CDBG programs, including Consolidated Plans, Action Plans, and the Citizen Participation Plan.

II. AMENDMENTS

Program amendments, which substantially alter the CDBG project from that approved in the original application, shall not be submitted to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) without holding 1 public hearing in accordance with the procedures outlined within this Citizen Participation Plan. Minutes of the hearing will be submitted with the request for the amendment. All interested citizens, particularly the low and moderate income, elderly, handicapped, and residents of the project area, shall be made aware of and have the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments and/or submit alternative measures.

III. GRANTEE PERFORMANCE

The City will hold 1 performance hearing to solicit the public's opinion of the effectiveness of the CDBG program. The manner of notification will be the same as previously described for all public hearings. Notification will be made in the official journal a minimum of 10 calendar days prior to the anticipated submittal of close-out documents to HUD, will indicate the date, time, and place of the performance hearing, and invite comments and opinions on the CDBG activities implemented under the City CDBG

program being closed out. The notice will also state that special accommodations will be made for persons who wish to attend the hearing who are living with a disability, non-English-speaking, or of other special need provided the City receives a request for such accommodations no less than 3 days prior to the hearing.

This notice shall invite all interested parties, particularly those who are of low to moderate income, living with a disability, minority, non-English-speaking, of special need, and/or living in substandard housing or blighted neighborhoods, are encouraged to participate.

Consideration of Objection to Application

Persons wishing to object to approval of an application by HUD may make such objection known to:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St SW
Washington DC 20410

HUD will consider objections made only on the following grounds:

1. the application description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data;
2. the activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the applicant; and
3. the application does not comply with the requirements set forth in the City's Consolidated Plan or Action Plan or other applicable laws.

Such objections should include both an identification of the requirements not met and, in the case of objections relative to 1 above, the complainant must supply the data upon which he/she relied upon to support his/her objection.

Bilingual

Whenever a significant number of persons and/or residents of blighted neighborhoods communicate with a primary language other than English attend public hearings, the City will provide an interpreter for dissemination of information to them providing the City is given sufficient notification of 3 days.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance may be provided directly by the City to any citizen, particularly low- and moderate-income persons, residents of blighted neighborhoods, and minorities, who requests assistance in the development of proposals and statement of views concerning the CDBG program. The local officials, administrator, and engineer will conduct informational meetings with the residents of the low- to moderate-income areas if a written request is received by the City with at least a 1 week notification. The persons who conduct the technical assistance meetings will disseminate information on the program and answer all pertinent questions.

Timely Access and Adequate Information

The City shall provide timely disclosure of records, information, and documents related to the CDBG program activities. Documents will be made available for copying upon request at

Grants Department
310 E Charles St 2nd Fl
Hammond LA 70401-3324

Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Such documents may include the following:

1. all meetings and promotional materials;
2. records of hearings and meetings;
3. all key documents, including prior applications, letters, grant agreements, citizen participation plans, and proposed applications;
4. copies of the regulations (final statements) concerning the program;
5. documents regarding other important requirements, such as Procurement Procedures, Fair Housing, Equal Employment Opportunity, Uniform Act, Labor Provisions and Environmental Procedures.

Citizen Complaint Procedure

SECTION 1

It is the policy of the City to review all complaints received by the City.

SECTION 2

The following procedures will be followed on all complaints received by the City:

1. The complainant shall notify the Grants Director of the complaint. The initial complaint may be expressed orally or by written correspondence.
2. The Grants Director will notify the Mayor or designated representative of the complaint within 3 working days.
3. The Mayor or designated representative will investigate the complaint and will report the findings to the Grants Director within 5 working days.
4. The Grants Director will notify the complainant of the findings of the Mayor or designated representative in writing or by telephone within 5 working days.
5. If the complainant is aggrieved by the decision, he/she must forward the complaint in writing (if previously submitted orally) to the Grants Director who will forward the complaint and all actions taken by the Mayor or designated representative to the appropriate Hammond City Council (Council) committee for their review. This will be accomplished within 30 working days of receipt of the written complaint.
6. The committee will have 15 working days to review the complaint and forward their decision to the complainant in writing.
7. If the complainant is aggrieved with the decision of the committee, he/she must notify the Grants Director in writing that he/she desires to be afforded a hearing by the Council. The complainant will be placed on the next regularly scheduled Council meeting agenda. The Grants Director will notify the complainant in writing of the date of the hearing.
8. The complainant must bring all relevant data, witnesses, etc. to the hearing. The Mayor and Council,

at the hearing, will review the complaint and forward within 15 days a certified copy of the minutes of the meeting at which the hearing was conducted and a decision was rendered to the complainant. If a decision is not reached at the hearing, the Mayor and the Council will inform complainant of an appropriate date to expect a response. Within 5 working days of the decision, the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision.

Complaints concerning the general administration of the CDBG program may be submitted in writing directly to the:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St SW
Washington DC 20410

SECTION 3

All citizen complaints relative to Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity violations alleging discrimination shall be forwarded for disposition to the:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St SW
Washington DC 20410

The complainant will be notified in writing within 10 days that, due to the nature of the complaint, it has been forwarded to HUD.

or

The complainant may contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development directly at 202-708-1112 (T) or 202-708-1455 (TTY).

SECTION 4

The Grants Director will maintain a file for the purpose of keeping reports of complaints.

SECTION 5

This policy does not invalidate nor supersede the personnel or other policies of the City that are currently

adopted, but is intended to serve as a guide for complaints.

SECTION 6

This policy may be amended by a majority vote at any of the Council at its regularly scheduled meetings.

Adoption

This Citizen Participation Plan is hereby adopted by the Council in its regular session of _____ by Resolution # _____.